

DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION

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**Agenda Item #4**

November 18, 1999

To: Delta Protection Commission
From: Lori Clamurro, Delta Protection Commission Staff
Subject: Delta Protection Commission Review of Proposed FY 2000 CALFED
Category III Projects

At the November 17, 1999 CALFED Policy Group meeting, the need for Delta Protection Commission review of Category III projects in the Legal Delta was discussed. The Policy Group has recommended approval of the attached three projects (as part of a package of proposals to be funded in FY 2000), subject to Commission review and comment. Due to the short notice, the Commission cannot take formal action on these matters. Project representatives and CALFED staff will brief the Commission on these three projects and seek Commission comments.

In considering the funding of future projects, it is expected that CALFED staff and project proponents would come before the Delta Protection Commission to give presentations on implementation projects (as opposed to studies and monitoring), to get Commission input before the projects are passed on to the Policy Group for approval.

The three implementation projects within the Legal Delta which are being considered for FY 2000 funding are:

- McCormack-Williamson Tract: planning and research funds (which will lead to a project; the site was acquired in September 1999);
- Canal Ranch: planning and research funds (which may lead to a project); and
- Liberty Island: acquisition funds for two remaining parcels, and planning funds for the entire island (which was acquired in September 1999).

For each of these projects, a more complete description and map are attached.

Descriptions of Recommended Projects for FY 2000

99-B116 Canal Ranch Habitat Restoration Phase II

Applicant: Department of Fish and Game
Requested Amount: \$131,980
Recommended Amount: \$131,980

The Canal Ranch Habitat Management Plan includes restoration of seasonal wetlands, riparian and shaded riverine aquatic habitats, and enhancement of agricultural management for fish and wildlife on 3,070 acres located in the northeastern Delta, San Joaquin County. Phase II involves ground truthing the Plan with the results of Phase I. The Interim Science Panel concluded this was continuation of important work in a high priority area and had strong links to important agricultural issues. This effort would validate and demonstrate the concept of wildlife-friendly agricultural practices, providing benefits to agriculture and wildlife.

Ecosystem Roundtable Comments: Concern was expressed by the Delta Protection Commission that they were unaware of the project and had not been notified by the applicant. They were concerned that the local landowners may not be fully aware of the project. It was explained that administrative issues like failure to provide notification and permission for access would be treated in a manner consistent with the 1999 proposals. Applicants would be given a finite amount of time to provide the necessary notification or their project would not be funded.

99-B192 McCormack-Williamson Tract Phase II Restoration Planning

Applicant: Department of Water Resources
Requested Amount: \$355,000
Recommended Amount: \$355,000

CALFED recently funded the acquisition of McCormack-Williamson Tract, a 1,600-acre Delta island located in southwestern Sacramento County. This proposal will support the design and environmental documentation for the restoration of the Tract. With the purchase of the Tract final, the Interim Science Panel saw this as an integral part to restoration of this important area.

Ecosystem Roundtable Comments: The question was raised about the relationship of the two McCormack-Williamson Tract proposals. It was explained that the two proposals were linked. The restoration planning is Task 5 of the project. The monitoring program includes Tasks 1-4 and Task 6 is project management. It was pointed out that the Integration Panel, in their previous consideration of these proposals in June of this year, did not recommend funding the terrestrial monitoring activities.

99-B193 McCormack-Williamson Tract Phase II Monitoring Program

Applicant: UC Davis
Requested Amount: \$556,200
Recommended Amount: \$566,200

This project complements the above proposal by conducting the historical research and baseline studies necessary for restoration planning and development of a monitoring program for the McCormack-Williamson Tract. The Interim Science Panel concluded that it was critical to develop a good restoration and monitoring plan for this area.

Ecosystem Roundtable Comments: The question was raised about the relationship of the two McCormack-Williamson Tract proposals. It was explained that the two proposals were linked. The restoration planning is Task 5 of the project. The monitoring program includes Tasks 1-4 and Task 6 project management. It was pointed out that the Integration Panel, in their previous consideration of these proposals in June of this year, did not recommend funding the terrestrial monitoring activities.

99-B165 Liberty Island Acquisition and Restoration Phase II

Applicant: US Fish and Wildlife Service
Requested Amount: \$13,495,605
Recommended Amount: \$2,623,043

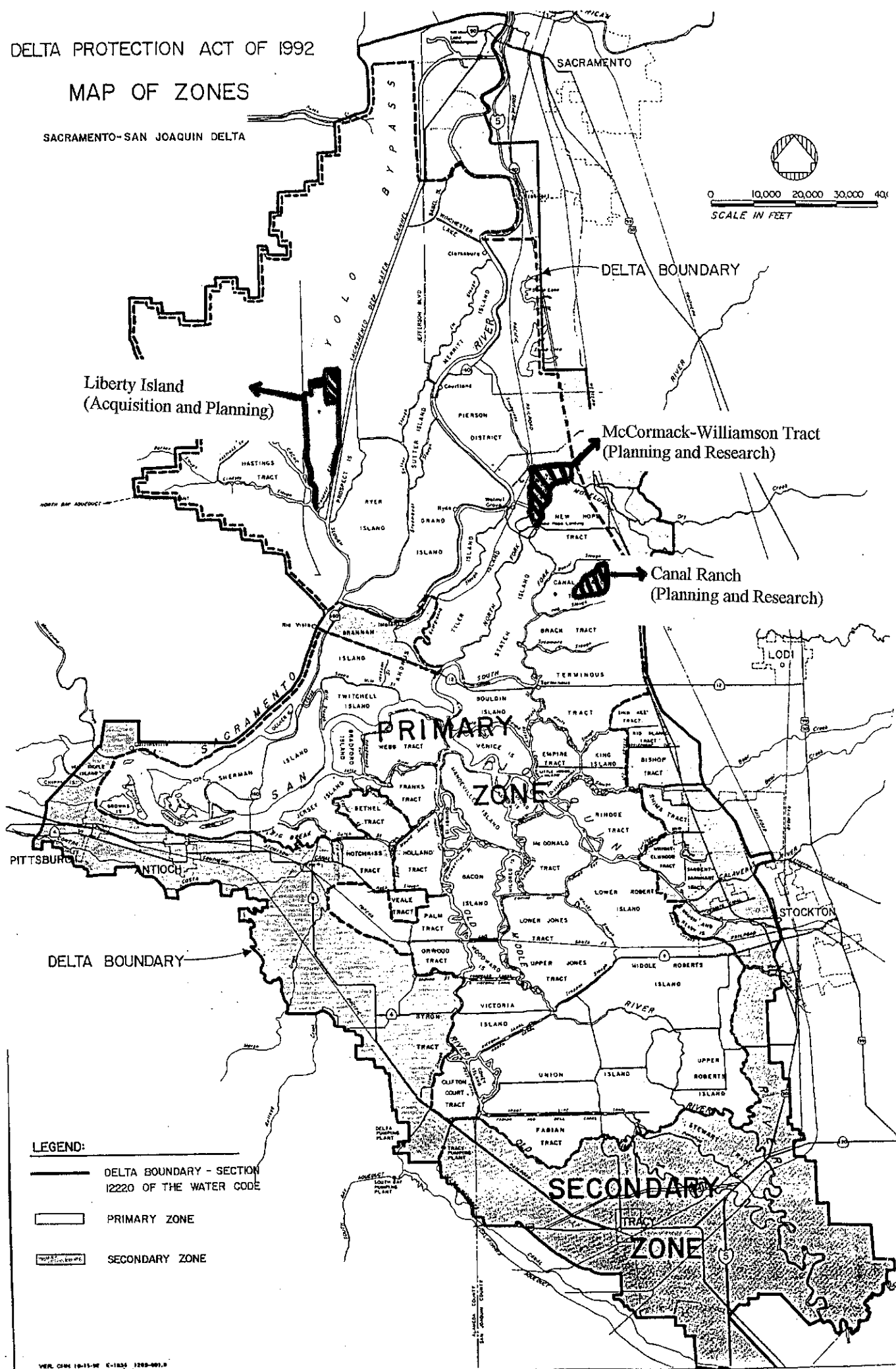
In 1997, CALFED provided funding to acquire the majority of Liberty Island. This proposal is to purchase two inholdings, to develop a restoration and monitoring plan for Liberty Island, and to purchase two additional properties. Restoration of this 5,209-acre parcel will provide tidal shallow-water, tidal emergent wetlands, seasonal wetlands, Delta sloughs, and riparian habitat to benefit Delta smelt, winter-run Chinook salmon, and other priority species. The Technical Review Panel and Interim Science Panel recommend funding the two inholding acquisitions and development of the restoration and monitoring plan. The Interim Science Panel observed that acquisition of the inholdings would provide greater flexibility in restoration planning and reduce future liability. The Technical Review Panel and Interim Science Panel did not recommend acquiring the other identified North Delta parcels detached from Liberty Island at this time.

Ecosystem Roundtable Comments: There was discussion about both of the proposed land acquisition projects relative to the House Energy and Water Subcommittee budget language which "directs that Bay-Delta funds shall not be used for land and water right acquisitions without proper consideration to, and mitigation of, the economic impacts associated with such acquisitions." It was explained that the acquisition of the properties will not result in a land use change, and that subsequent restoration activities would have to undergo subsequent environmental documentation which would address this specific issue. Additional concerns were expressed about completion of environmental documentation prior to acquiring property. It was explained that the US Fish and Wildlife Service has been administering land acquisitions for CALFED and has requirements to complete appropriate environmental compliance prior to acquiring any lands. The Delta Protection Commission expressed concern that Liberty Island is contained in the North Delta National Wildlife Refuge and that those environmental documents are not complete.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT OF 1992

MAP OF ZONES

SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA



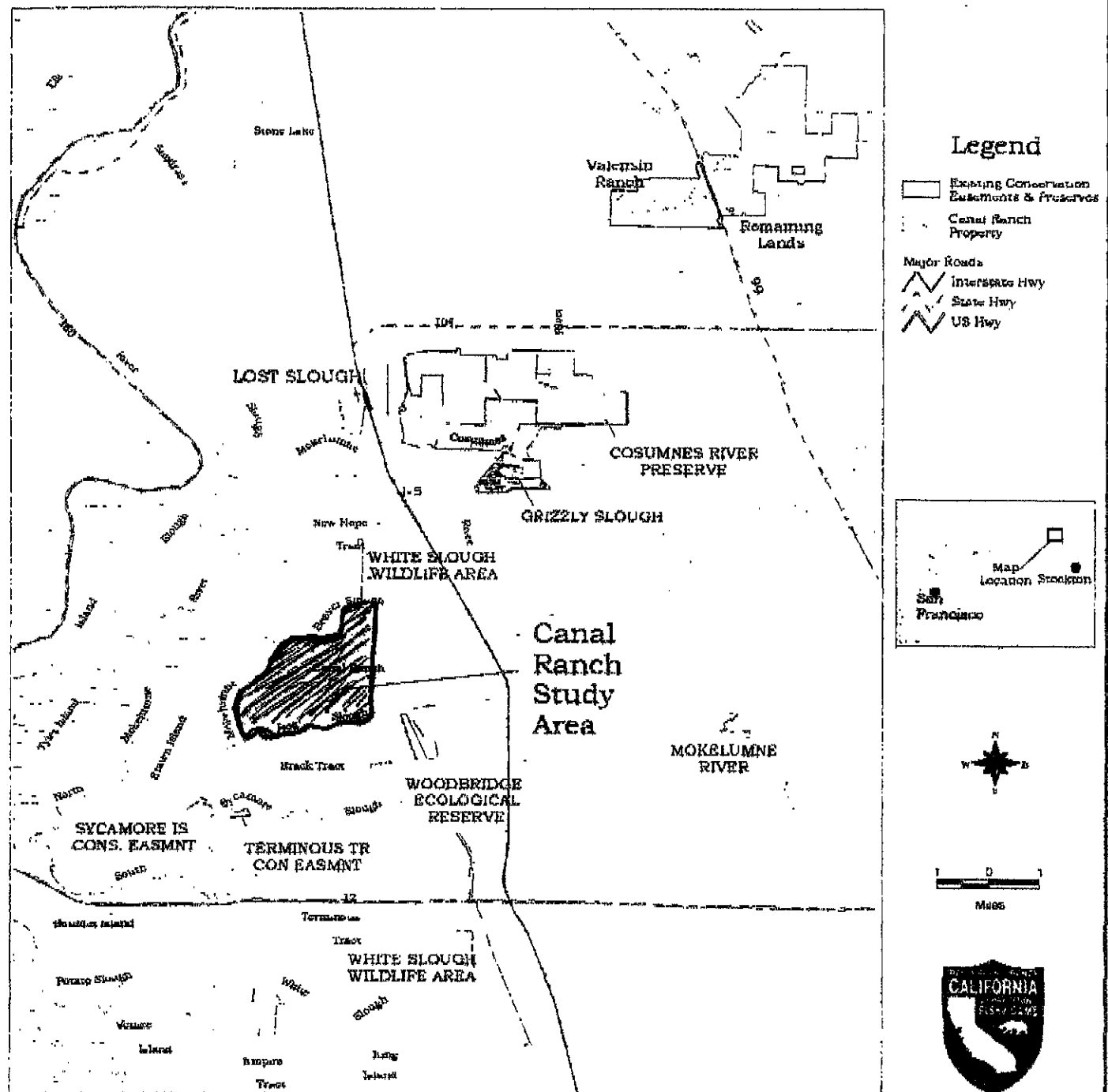
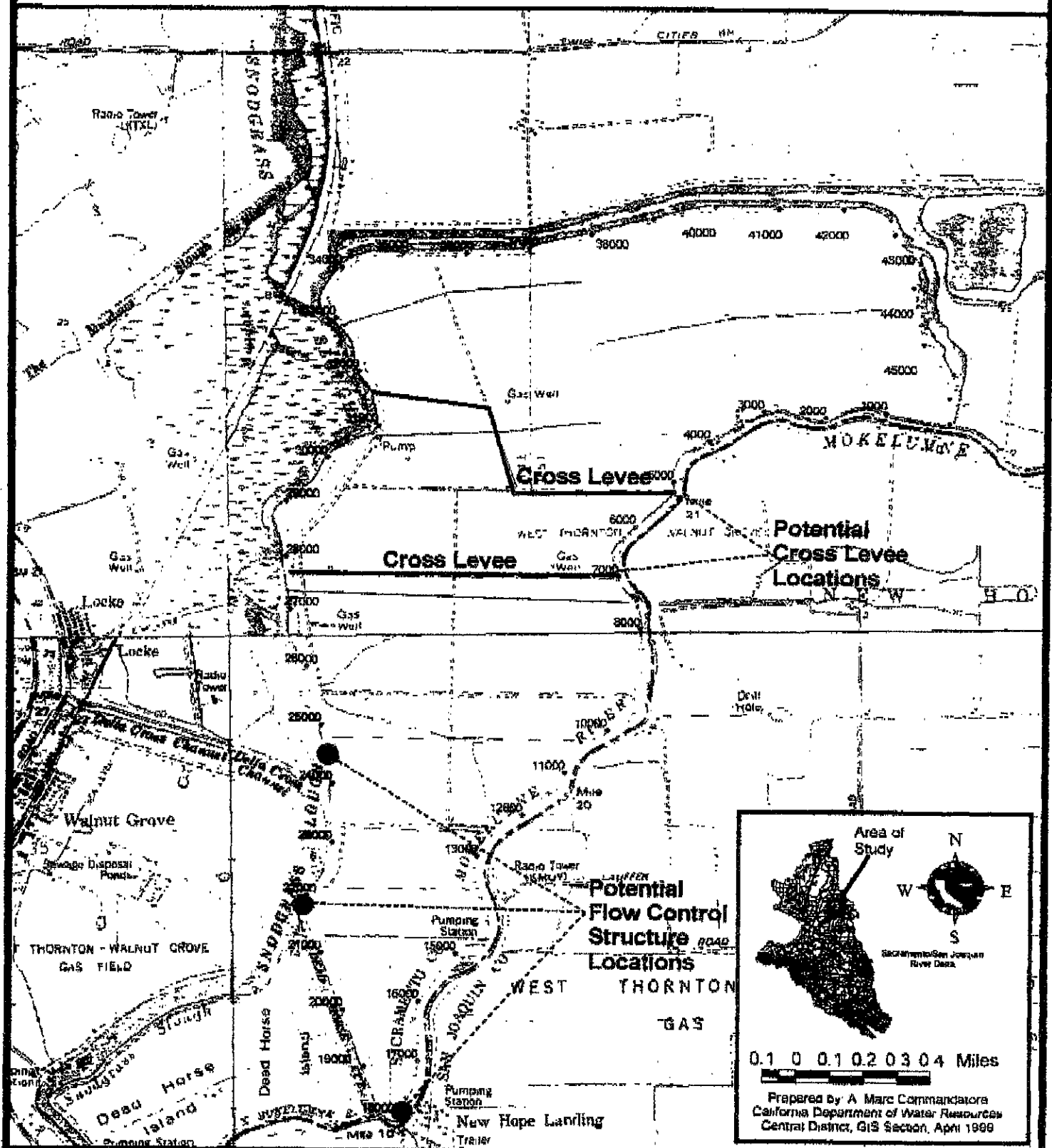


Figure 2. The Proposed Canal Ranch Fish and Wildlife Management Area.

**McCormack - Williamson Tract Restoration Planning,
Design, and Monitoring Program**



APPENDIX A

Legend

- Property previously funded by CALFED in 1997
- Phase I Task 1: acquisition
- Phase II Task 6: acquisition

